The Orthodox Herald

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"Celebrating our 50th year" 1952-2001

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THE TEN STEPS

Pascha is very late this year – May 5. This makes a long break between the excitement of the Nativity, Baptism and Encounter of our Lord and the beginning of Great Lent. It is not until the last two Sundays of February that we are even alerted by the Church to the coming of the Great Fast. The reading of the gospel concerning Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10) and then the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14) are the beginning of the Pre-Lenten Season. It is interesting to note that both of these Sundays concern a publican. Publicans were tax collectors who often used extortionary practices. They had to collect a certain amount for the ruling government and then whatever more they could force out of a person they kept for themselves.

We tend to picture Zaccheus as a rather unassuming person. Perhaps, our image of him is colored by the simple Sunday School song: "Zaccheus is a little, little man." He may have been small in stature, but he was a definite presence in the town. The people were very upset that Jesus decided to go to his house as a guest. But there was some good in him. He wanted to see the Lord. Then his heart expanded in His presence and he resolved to make amends to all those he had wronged. He had chosen a new path for his life. It might not have been the New Year, but he made a resolution. It is the same with us. We have to want to find the Lord and pray that he visits our house which is our heart. We are on a new path. Step one.

The next Sunday, we are again confronted by a publican. But this time, he is not named. In contrast to Zaccheus, he was a decent man according to the prayer which he sent up to God in which he justified himself much as we do when we say: "I didn't kill anyone. I'm not a sinner." We are encouraged to look into ourselves honestly. To evaluate

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Good morning, Lord, I thank You
For peace all through the night...
Prepare me for the challenge
That comes with morning light.

THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

When Metropolitan Theodosius held a memorial service at Ground Zero, he was asked about funerals and about praying for the departed. He said that he explained that funerals involve more than praying for the dead, that they give hope to the living in the face of death, that they offer the living a thread to hold on to when all else seems lost.

In the Orthodox Church we have both communal and private prayers for the departed. The Church sets aside certain days when all the deceased of a parish are remembered. We are advised to send a list to the priest, updated as necessary, so that our list of names (gramoti) can be read. These days are called Ancestor's Days and can also be called All-Souls Days. These days and the dates on which they are held this year are the Saturday before Meatfare Sunday (March 9), the Saturdays of the 2nd (March 30), 3rd (April 6) and 4th (April 13) weeks of Great Lent; the Saturday before Pentecost (June 22), the Saturday before the Holy Day of St. Dimitri, October 19/November 2). Also on either Monday or Tuesday of St. Thomas week (May 13 or 14) and on the Holy Day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29/September 11).

We have been asked by some, on what days should they request special prayers for their departed ones. Prayers which demonstrate our ties to those who have fallen asleep and also instructs us the living. For we are reminded of our own mortality and exhorted to prepare for our own passage from this life. We pray for those who have departed, knowing that they have not passed into annihilation but their souls are still among the living.

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EXPRESSING ANGER

Everyone experiences anger. Yet we all seem to have trouble learning how to handle it well. Anger expressed is painful, difficult to live with, and often destructive. Holding anger in is often worse. Anger can make our life miserable. We might seeth repeatedly over a painful incident that occurred years ago. Unresolved anger can destroy friendships and even a good marriage.

How can we deal with this emotion in a positive way? When we think of anger in the Bible, the story that comes to mind is the one about the enraged Jesus turning out the money changers in the temple of Jerusalem. Those who follow the daily Bible readings will read this (Mark 11:15-26) on February 12, 13.

On a visit to the temple, Jesus finds merchants making a substantial personal profit selling sacrificial animals and changing foreign currency, both common practices of the time, sanctioned by temple priests. Nevertheless, Jesus becomes enraged at what He perceives as a violation of the spirit of worship and sanctity. He charges at the businessmen, whipping them and driving them out of the building, upsetting the tables of coins and cages of birds and animals. His anger is righteous and corrective.

The story provides some useful guidance. First, we learn that expressing anger is perfectly proper in certain situations. Jesus would not have made His point so effectively if He had stayed calm. While it's true that situations do call for restraint, and that inappropriate anger can generate conflicts and hurt people unfairly, at times anger is necessary and right. The trick is in knowing when and how to express anger.

Anger expressed in faith has a constructive purpose. Ask yourself: "If I get angry, will it help someone? Is this anger a healing anger?" If you can honestly answer: "Yes," have faith that

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CHRONOLOGY

FEBRUARY 2002

The February issue was mailed on January 19.

DIED: Matushka Josephine Felenchak, widow of Father Peter, in Jeanette, PA.

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN KIDS' CIRCUS can be seen at the State Theatre, 15 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901 on Feb. 24, 2002 at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Contact: 732/246-7469.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES has as its new president, Elenie Huszagh, a Greek Orthodox lawyer from Nehalem, Oregon. She is a first generation American.

ORGANIZED 100 YEARS AGO was the St. Sava Parish in McKeesport, PA. Originally it consisted of Russian and Serbian Orthodox and was under the Russian jurisdiction, the only one in America.

THREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES WILL BE BUILT IN QATER. The Gulf state government has given permission for an Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant church to be built.

AN IRON CHURCH was built by the Bulgarian Orthodox in Istanbul in 1870. It has been severely damaged by earthquakes. It was built of iron to prevent it from being burned. It was dedicated to St. Stephen.

THE RAILROAD CHURCH in Russia has finished its 2001 tour. During its run, over 1000 Russians were baptized with over 100 of these in Lake Baikal. The train covered over 9300 miles since August 7, when it started on its mission.

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS UNHAPPY with the selection of the new Orthodox Patriarch Ireneos of Jerusalem. They feel that he is partial to the Palestians although the policy of the Church is neutrality. The Orthodox Church looks after the majority of Holy Places, and the Church owns land in various parts of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. Some of this land is rented to the Israelis for government offices. As Patriarch, Ireneos has become the most important real estate owner in Israel.

THE U.S. ARMY is very short of chaplains. It is launching an aggressive "Consider the Call" recruiting campaign.

ICONS: The Fascination and the Reality by Konrad Onasch is not only a beautiful, well-made book, but its contents is incomparable. It is a complete study on icons covering the different schools, pictorial themes, a section on the icons of Mary, the Mother of God and even painting techniques. Excellent for special gift. $105 pp to Riverside Book Co., 250 West 57th St., NY 10107. Phone 212/765-2680.

A WONDERFUL SERVICE is being offered by the Orthodox Church of America on its website www.oca.org. Those who are either singing the responses or directing can get all the troparia and kondaks for all of 2002.

THE EASTERN CARPATHIANS were in the news as a white fir was donated by the Orthodox Romanians to stand in St. Peter's Square at Christmas. Children from Romania sang at the presentation to the Pope by President Ion Iliescu.

CONSTRUCTION OF A MOSQUE in Nazareth by Muslim fundamentalists with the support of the Israel government has been protested by Christian groups, many Muslim religious leaders and countries of the world, including George W. Bush.

THE ROMANIAN PATRIARCHATE has protested plans to make a park featuring the Dracula story. It stated that Dracula is a myth written by an Irish writer and has no historical basis.

A CODE OF CANONS of the Eastern Catholic Church has been reissued. The first English translation was released in 1992. This is the first time that the Eastern churches united with Rome and had their general law codified in a single document. The Orthodox do not have their canons codified.

HOLY RESURRECTION CHURCH IN KODIAK, ALASKA is badly in need of repair. For over 200 years, it has been the site of baptisms, weddings, funerals, liturgies, etc. Now it needs repairs. Special weather problems exist. To best meet these, the roof was done by the same company which did the Baranov Museum. It is guaranteed for 35 years. The cupolas will be weatherized with the same material used on the Coast Guard facilities in Kodiak. Help would be appreciated. Send to PO Box 55, Kodiak, AK 99615 or call 907/486-3854.

WE RECEIVED MANY REQUESTS about Bethlehems, Jaslickari, Gubi. These are groups in costume who went to parishioners' homes and put on a Christmas skit. You may order a Video of Jaslickari-Gubi (Bethlehem Carolers in Carpatho-Rusin) (#9) for $16.95 plus $3 postage from Holy Ghost Choir, 2310 South 24th, Philadelphia, PA 19145-3207.

CELEBRATING 50 years was the Christ the Saviour Seminary in Johnstown, PA. It has graduated over 100 with 98% being ordained into the priesthood. Four have become bishops. Slava.

THE NEXT OTSA meeting will be held from May 31-June 1.

OVER 50,000 Russian and Ukrainian Christian fundamentalists are living in Portland, Oregon. Most have arrived since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

MODERN BIBLE TRANSLATORS are making Scripture accessible in many ways, including video-based and electronic. Some are computer software packages such as Hermeneutika's Bibleworks, which offers 64 Bible translations in 22 languages, original language texts and a variety of research tools. 800/742-4253. There are even online Bibles and study tools that include concordances linked to Christian artworks and movie themes. www.elca.org/os/bookshlf.html#Bibles.

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THE TEN STEPS

ourselves – our bad as well as good. This is so against our culture where self-esteem is upmost. The prayer of the Pharisee is a favorite of many people. They repeat it many times a day: "Lord, Jesus Christ have mercy on me a sinner." Step two.

We are ready for the next step of the Ten Steps to a more spiritual, fulfilling life.

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THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Memorial Services (Panahida) are sung on the 3rd, 9th, 40th days and on the yearly anniversary of death.

On the 3rd day, which is usually the burial day, we pray that Our Saviour, who rose on the third day, would raise His servant to everlasting life.

On the 9th day, we pray that His servant may be numbered among the nine ranks of angels and saints.

On the 40th day, the last day of special prayers for the newly-departed and kept chiefly in memory of Christ's Ascension, we pray that the souls of the departed may also ascend "in glory" and be forever with God. We, the living, must let them go.

During the Memorial Services, we stand with lighted candles as a sign that we believe in the future, radiant life. Towards the end of the service, during the reading of the Lord's Prayer, the candles are extinguished as a sign that our lives, like burning candles, must expire more often than not without burning through to the expected end.

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EXPRESSING ANGER

your anger is good. To be constructive we must have faith in the purpose of our anger. We must trust our inner voice crying out against injustice and wrongdoing. Faith combined with anger can truly "move mountains."

Jesus also teaches that forgiveness is a necessary partner to anger. Without forgiveness anger is always destructive. We can forgive once we acknowledge our anger, express it, and use it constructively.

Finally, we learn that faith and forgiveness also provide the key to controlling anger. True control means finding effective ways to express emotions, ways rich in healing and forgiveness. Emotions don't disappear. They always manage to surface. Control means making our anger work to the benefit of everyone.

Anger can be healthy and productive when properly used. You can combine anger, faith and forgiveness into a powerful force to make yourself happy and well at any time. Be enraged at depression. Get furious at fear. Have faith that you can be joyful. Forgive yourself, your failures. Anger can be the source of a wonderful energy you can put to work in changing yourself and your world for the better.

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Mareea,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shitko awright noh yah mala takee scare! Tak bulo. Yah pokleekala nashu krayanku nah telephoneh. Day after day ohna neh answer me. Yah dumam zhe ohna neh mozhe etee nah vonka all the time ee yah dostala take worried. Finally, yah zveedala me next door neighbor shtobe ohna me drivovala dah krayankee's house. Kolee me tam preeshlee yah peeshla nah front porchyu ee ringyuyu ee ringyuyu doorbell. Yah neh got any answer. Yah dumam zhe something is funny boh yah chewyu voices u housyee. Yah neh znam shto yah gotta do. Then me next door neighbor kreetchee ot caree: "Try the door. I'll call for help if you need it."

Yah bulla taka scared boh yah chewyuh zhe krayanka kreetonee ee moaning, uh housyee. Yah try the dveree. Ohne neh bulee zamknutee, ee yah teehenko sneaked into the parlor. Yah couldn't believe me eyes. Krayanka bulla sama u housye! TV was on ee tam seedeela krayanka watching Soap Opera. Kolo yeh bullo thermos coffee ee dish with sandwichee. Yah, zvedala: "Krayanka, you OK?" Ah, ohna me kazhe to sit down ee budtee quiet poka yakees scene neh finish nah TV. Ohno neh hotcheela smissovatee nech.

Yah sealah. Yah watchovala yak krayanka talking to TV. Yah bulla tak shocked what I saw and chewla ot TV! Believe me zhe takee business zhe going on u nashem seele be arrestovanee.

Yah relieved zhe nasha krayanke OK noh yah dumam zhe ohna more interested in yeh familiyah nah TV more than what is happening uh nash dull life.

Budte zdrovee
Hanya

NOTES ON OUR 50TH

For years **The Orthodox Herald** has been a source of shared enjoyment for my mother and me. Putting out a monthly newsletter for over 50 years must have been a labor of love for you both. So many of us appreciate all your fine efforts. Would you consider reprinting past issues, either whole or in part?

Lisa A. Price

Our thoughts go back to when we were introduced to "The Herald" through the church packet plan. The paper, which disappeared very quickly from the leaflet rack, was read cover to cover, used as Sunday School lessons, adult study groups and passed on to others who thoroughly enjoyed and savoured the information – let it be religious items, Bible Study, recipes, chronology, etc. Then we met the editors and became dear friends. After this we subscribed so that we could be assured of not missing an issue, as the paper so disappeared quickly from the leaflet rack in the church.

We are also very proud and grateful for this publication being in English and written for all ages – so easily understandable by all. We have been blessed to know two dedicated missionaries sharing the "Word of God," plus other good news of the Church, as well as laughter through "Dear Hanya."

We rejoice withyou on your 50th year of work in the Lord's vineyard and pray for your continued health.

Vladimir and Agnes Fryntzko

We have been listing the names of people who have been on our subscription list for almost 50 years. We have been informed that we have many readers who have been taking it from copies sent to their Church through the Packet Plan. We appreciate all of you and thank The Fryntzkos and George Walko for informing us of their 50 years of readership. From our subscription cards we find other 50 readers. Lawrence Grivna, Henry Grabowski, Helen Jemma, Mary Kuyon, Sonia Kotrady, George Krishen.

GOOD SAMARITANS

...A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion... Luke 10:30-33

The parable of the Good Samaritan found in the Gospel According to St. Luke 10:25-37 is well known to us all. On a literal level, it tells the story of one man helping a stranger. The events of September 11 showed us countless examples of present day "good Samaritans" who helped strangers in the aftermath of terrible tragedy. The nation came together and offered support to the suffering and comfort to the bereaved. Our concept of community immediately changed. Our neighbor was no longer limited to the person next door but now included people across the country who needed our help in this difficult time.

In a very real sense, our parishes are communities. This was particularly evident in the early years of the last century. Immigrants lived in ethnic neighborhoods near the church. The church not only provided for the spiritual needs of its members, but it also became the center of their social activities and education. Churches were important parts of communities then, regardless of the location or ethnic group that belonged.

Parishioners often came from the same village or region in Europe. They were far from their own families in the old country, but *krayane* looked after one another. No one was alone; no one was forgotten. The parish community became a surrogate family.

Although most people no longer live near the church, we Orthodox Christians are still bound together in parish communities. We pray together and may associate with some parishioners on a regular basis due to involvement in a church organization or committee. This often results in close-knit groups, and this is good.

But what about the strangers in our churches? I don't mean the occasional visitor, but the strangers among us: the elderly and homebound who are often forgotten and become only names on the parish roster; the quiet parishioner who faithfully attends Liturgy but is seldom acknowledged by others. In light of the recent events in our country, it seemed so easy for us to relate to our "neighbors" across the country, yet many people in our own parishes are not treated as a part of the community. I find this troubling.

We need to closely examine our purpose in life as Orthodox Christians. Regardless of the size of our parish, measures can be taken to ensure that we continue the sense of community established by those who came before us.

One can begin by forming an outreach committee in one's own parish. Is there a senior who needs a ride to church? A widow who has difficulty keeping up with her yard work? A caregiver who needs a break some afternoon? Or a lonely parishioner who would welcome an occasional visit to help pass the time? Yes, time is a precious commodity in our busy lives, but a card or a phone call can do so much to brighten a person's day. I know several women who faithfully send cards to the seniors in their parish. What joy they bring to the recipients for they know they are remembered and prayed for!

It is, indeed, an act of Christian charity to help the person in need across the country or overseas, but we must not forget our own people. Our lives on earth are very short, so begin today. Send a card. Smile and say hello to someone you usually pass by. Listen to a story. Make a new friend. Through such simple acts of kindness, two lives will be enriched.

Margaret Pysarchyk

•WHEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD COMES TO CHURCH

This is an excellent time to teach your child many of the important facts and beliefs about our Faith.

What is the origin of Orthodox Hymnology?

Ironically, the first hymns of the Christian period were those of the heretics, who employed literary and musical artistry to emphasize their incorrect doctrine. St. Ephraim the Syrian was the first hymnographer who composed troparia against the heretics. Through him Syrian poetry exerted a decisive influence upon Byzantine hymnography for many decades.

The rise of a new poetic form, the kontakion, is associated with the name of St. Romanos the Melodist. St. Romanos was of Syrian origin.

The third type of liturgical poetry, the canon, was first fashioned by St. Andrew of Crete. His canon is still read during Great Lent. Later hymnographers, like St. Cosmas of Maiuma and his Step-brother St. John of Damascus patterned their canons after his.

The first use of the Octoechoes (8 tones) was composed by Severus the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch (a heretic) in the 5th Century. St. John of Damascus eliminated the heresies. So our system of Church music is of ancient Syrian Christian extraction.

Your Faith and Beliefs can be communicated to your children most efficiently by you.

Fr. Elias Mitchell

THE MEETING OF THE LORD

On February 2/15 we celebrate the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple by SS Simeon and Anna. The Gospel reading for the day Luke 2:22-40 very fully explains the reason for the commemoration of this day.

The Law of Moses prescribed that every Jewish mother, after giving birth to a boy child, was to be excluded from attendance at public worship for forty days. At the end of this period she had to present a yearling lamb for a burnt sacrifice and a pigeon for a sin-offering, thus purifying herself from ritual and uncleanliness. In the case of poor people, two pigeons were accepted as an offering. (Lev 12:2-8).

The gospel reports how Mary, after the birth of Jesus, fulfilled this command of the Law, and how, on the same occasion, Simeon and Anna met the newborn Saviour.

Since Jesus Himself was present at this event, it came to be celebrated as a Holy Day of the Lord.

The day has been celebrated from the very earliest days in the Church. An

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THE MEETING OF THE LORD

account of it can be found in Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage. She was a lady from Spain who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 380. She describes the impressive services and the ceremonies which were held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on this day.

Why has the observance of these days lessened. At one time, people checked their calendar and if it was a Holy Day they did no manual labor. Where has this gone?

THE DIFFERENCE

Adherents of the New Age Movement have entered the Orthodox Church recently. What change have they had to accept concerning Jesus Christ? In the Orthodox Church, we believe that Jesus Christ was both God and man. According to Jason Barker in "Examining the Christ of the Alternative Religions":

The key component of New Age Christology is the distinction between Jesus the man and the Christ. Members of the New Age typically believe that Jesus Christ was a normal man who achieved 'Christ-consciousness' and realized that He, as well as all other humans are God. Mark and Elizabeth Clare Prophet, the founders of the Church Universal and Triumphant, clearly explain the New Age understanding of Jesus Christ vis-a-vis the Christ-consciousness:

> Jesus was both the actual and symbolical representative of this Christ Self. Jesus was the example, the one who self-realized the Christ Mind and was at one with it at all times. Jesus himself was not the only begotten Son of the Father. The Christ of Him was and is the only begotten Son of the Father, and Jesus was the pure vessel of that Universal One. He was the One Sent, chosen from among the Sons of heaven to embody the Christ on earth as the avatar, the exemplar for all to follow for the two thousand year Picean cycle.

The Christ-consciousness achieved by Jesus is the goal to which all people are to aspire. Most New Age devotees believe, as stated by Neale Donald Walach, that 'many have achieved such consciousness. Many have been Christed, not just Jesus of Nazareth.'

Many individuals believe that Jesus achieved Christ-consciousness while traveling to the Far East during the years between His barmitzvah and His baptism, learning the esoteric secrets of the Orient from gurus in India and Tibet. ...

According to many New Age teachers, Jesus Christ is now one of the 'ascended masters,' an elite group of gurus who reach across the astral plane to guide humans toward achieving Christ-consciousness.

Big difference!

PRAYER ROPE/BEADS OR CHOTKI

The custom of reciting prayers upon a string, with knots or beads at regular intervals, has come down from the early days of Orthodox Christianity. It originated among the early monks and hermits who used a piece of heavy cord with knots tied at intervals upon which they recited their shorter prayers.

The customary prayer used is the one said by the publican who stood at the back of the temple (Luke 18:10-14) and said: "Lord, have mercy on me a sinner." Our Lord says that the publican went out justified. This is called the prayer of Jesus, and there are several variations of it.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me."

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Sometimes the following are preferred:

"Lord Jesus Christ, by the prayers of the holy Mother of God, have mercy on us."

"Most holy Mother of God, pray for me a sinner."

Bishop Theophanes who lived in Russia from 1815-94 wrote to one of his teachers. "It has occurred to me to tell you the following. One may confine the whole rule of prayer to making bows with one of the short prayers. Make a bow and repeat one of the short prayers (given above), and express your needs or give praise and thanks to God. Then pass a bead between the fingers; then repeat the words and again pass a bead and so on. But I must say that the essence of prayer is the lifting up of one's mind and heart to God. Many laymen pray this way. When the prayers composed by others and learned by heart cease to have effect and no longer arouse emotion, you may pray like this for a day or two, and then return to the memorized prayers and so on in turns."

For more information on the use of your prayer beads/chotki read The Way of the Pilgrim and The Pilgrim Continues on His Way.

LEADING OTHERS TO CHRIST

Thousands of years ago, St. John Chrysostom spoke on the topic of leading others to Christ. He enumerated many of the excuses which he had heard on why someone could not do this. So many of them are still relevant today. He said: "Nothing is colder than a Christian who does not care about the salvation of others.

You cannot plead the excuse of poverty; the widow who gave her two mites will stand to accuse you. Peter said, 'Silver or gold, I have none.' While St. Paul was so poor he often went hungry, lacking necessary food.

You cannot plead not being important. They were of low estate and so were their parents.

You cannot allege lack of education or preparation; not knowing enough about your 'religion.' They were unlearned men.

You cannot plead infirmity or sickness. Timothy was often laid low by sickness and the Apostle had to counsel him to take a little wine for his stomach.

Every person can help his neighbor if only he does what he can.

So you see, you cannot say: 'It is impossible for me to lead others to faith.' If you are a Christian, it is impossible not to do so. The natural properties of things cannot be denied. This witnessing to others is part of the very nature of being a Christian. It would be easier for the sun to cease to shine and give forth heat than for a Christian not to send forth light; easier for the light to be darkness than for this to be so."

FIRST CENTURY ADVICE

On the Lord's own day, gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. Let no man, having a dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until he has been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled.

SOBORNOST

Whether in Antioch or at Corinth, in Galatia or at Rome, each community is the **same Catholic Church** – whole in its faith, and with the same conciliar structure, as the apostolic Church of Jerusalem. The difference is that the leadership within the community no longer belongs to the Twelve. With the death of the apostles, each local community, each local church centered around its bishop and presbyters, acts as the conciliar body, arriving at and preserving the consensus on matters of faith and practice. He who presides over the Eucharist (the *proistamenos*) is gradually identified as the community leader, who takes the place of Christ in the local church. This leader is the bishop. Just as the Apostle Peter was the rock upon which the proto-Christian community of Jerusalem was built, in the same way, according to the Orthodox theology of *sobornost*, every bishop becomes the rock of his community.

In the words of Father Meyendorff:

> "In every church" the Apostles "ordained elders" (Acts 14:23, etc.) who formed an essential element in the order of the Church. The Christian gathering over which these "elders" were called to preside was essentially **sacramental** in nature. By that we mean that the men who formed it (inasmuch as they had received baptism) really did make up the Body of Christ, the family of God, a holy people of kings and sacrificers (I Peter 2:5; Revelation 1:6; 5:10; cf. Exodus 19:6). The center of their common life was their meeting; "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20). Within this meeting the Christians formed the **same community** as that which met in the upper room, presided over by Christ himself. The man who presides over the Christian gathering is, therefore the image of Jesus himself."

Fr. Michael Dahulich, Ph.D.
St. Tikhon Seminary: Professor

CANDLES

In many parishes candles are blessed on the Holy Day of the Meeting of the Lord (Streteniye) on February 2/15. This is done to emphasize the reference to Christ as "a Light" in Luke 2:32. These blessed candles are used in the church and are usually available for use in the home. In some parishes, people bring their own candles, sometimes beautifully decorated, to be blessed. These candles are used at the Holy Supper on Christmas Eve, at the blessing of the home, in the room of the sick or dying, at Easter, etc. They are sometimes called "thunder" or "gromnitza" candles and are lighted during storms and lightning.

The lighting of candles is a must in the Orthodox Church. No service can be held without them. We can trace their use down the centuries from Acts 20:8 where the disciples met for services and "there were many lamps." In the 2nd century, Tertullian wrote: "we never hold a service without candles ... in order to represent Christ, the Uncreated Light, without Whom we would in broad daylight wander as if lost in darkness."

This custom continued as we note St. Jerome wrote in the 4th century. In all Eastern Churches, candles are lit in the daytimes ... not to dispel the darkness but as a sign of joy ... to feel that Light of which we read in the Psalms." Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

Three centuries later St. Sopronius wrote: "Lampadas and candles represent the Eternal Light..."

The Holy Canons of the Church formulated at the 7th Ecumenical Council (787) that the holy ikons, relics, Cross and Holy Gospel were to be honored by censing and candles lighted before them.

Candles are held by the faithful at various services held in the church. A few of them are at weddings, baptisms, funerals, memorial services, Holy Thursday, and Holy Friday, etc.

There are many symbolic meanings given but they all point to the "Light." St. Seraphim wrote: "Let our heart glow with love and our life shine with light before our Lord like the flame of a taper before His ikon."

Next time you are in church, light a candle for a special intention. It is a centuries and centuries old tradition.

Whatever

The times when faith is on trial offer Christians the opportunity to be the Church by being a people together. God chooses the weak things of the world ... because it makes room for the action of the Spirit, Pride-shuts the Spirit out because it shuts us off from relying on each other.

Listening to my own life has taught me that sometimes when I feel lonely in a particular intense or painful way, it is because I am inattentive to the presence of people who could be there for me. I also know that my sense of loneliness is related to my carelessness in making the effort to be present to whomever I am with.

"Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Pardon, and you shall be pardoned. Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will they pour into the fold of your garment. For the measure you measure will be measured back to you. Luke 6:36-38

Tell God when you are sad, when you are worried, when you do not know what to do, when you are anxious. He is waiting to hear about it because He loves you. This being the case, nothing is inconsequential or unimportant. Everything that concerns you interests Him.

The marks of the person of sorrow are kindness, understanding, and acceptance. The person of sorrow does not merely tolerate others. This person accepts and tries to understand. As we grow older, and suffer and accept that suffering in our lives, we become more benign and kinder to others ... Gentleness is a quality of the person of sorrow.

The Hilander Institute, located in Ohio State University, contains many microfilms of ancient manuscripts from St. Catherine's Orthodox Monastery on Mt. Siani and from many libraries on Mount Athos. It is especially rich in material from Hilander Monastery, located on the Mount.



EDITORS' NOTES

This month is the shortest month on the calendar, yet here in northeast Pennsylvania it seems like the longest. By this time we are tired of the cold and the snow and long to see the sun again. We start looking at the garden catalogues and plan to landscape the yard. The dreams are necessary, whether they are attained or not.

Fifty years ago, when we dreamed about starting an English language paper, we had nothing to guide us. Our dream was fed by the need of the young Orthodox who had faith but knew little about their religion. Fifty years later, we find young and old as eager as then to learn more about their faith. We also find that people want to learn about the traditions which enrich their religion. They are proud of their ethnicity and want to learn, learn, learn. We try to fill the need.

We write about the Holy Days each month. Yet, we find that few people attend either the Vesper or Divine Liturgy to commemorate the event or person honored on the day. Why? Attending only on Sunday is not enough to keep yourself spiritually fed. If you follow the church calendar carefully, it will give a definite rhythm to your life. One Holy Day flows into the next. Please God, your priest and yourself. Try getting to church on February 2/15. The date is easy to remember because much attention will be given to Groundhog Day, which is found on the same date.

God be with you and protect you.

The Stroyens

* * * * * *

Satan may ring your doorbell, but you don't have to invite him to dinner.

PRESS FUND

You keep us printing – THANK YOU/SPASEBO. Anna Pinko, Mary Wasylko, Paul and Dee Baumgarten, Mary Kinn, Helen Dzugan, Dr. Jerome and Diane Wolf, Harry and Constance Gobora, Anne Dorozynski, Afton Chowansky, Mary Kochmaruk, Anonymous (2), Mary Stoyka, Sophie Nahorniak, Doris Rusinko, Orthodox Society of America, Ethel Watlock, Victor Sobolewski, DO, Sonya Naryshkin, MD, Ernie Schmidt, George Brozina, John Bodnar, Mary Matrician, Tom Swift, Mary Zemanik, George and Mary Kuyon, Vera Hershey, National Slovak Society, Olga Chernik, Irene Allen, George Yura, Mary Kollar, John and Linda Deak, **Mary Kopey**, Helen Tucker, Betty Swizz.

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Prayers for the sick and their caregivers from George and Anna Yura. Prayers for health for Steve and Justyna Pelak.

Julia Bockhaus in memory of Eva Durkot. Joseph Holobinko in memory of his wife, Diane, who died on Nov. 19. Ed and Irene Rhenish in memory of their son, John, who died on Nov. 30. Arnold and Julia Katko in memory of their parents and Natalie's grandparents. Paul and Ellen Shiptenko in memory of parents Victor and Helen Malacky and Elias and Pauline Shiptenko. Charles R. Smith in memory of John Rhenish. Velma Bova in memory of Fr. Nicholas Fedorchak. Jeremy and Renee Hersey in memory of great-aunt Diane Holobinko. Michael and Edith Bondarchuk in memory of parents Fr. Averky and Matushka Marie Dran Bondarchuk. Felenchak Family in memory of Matushka Josephine Felenchak. Steve and Leona Evancho prayers and blessings for Claudia Sulin, Ed Brisbine, Fr. and Matushka Stroyen, George and Elizabeth Uhrin, Anna Plefka, Frank and Irene Bosela.

LIGHTER MOMENT

A little boy opened the big and old Family Bible with fascination and was turning the pages when something fell out of the Bible. He picked it up and looked at it closely, it was an old, large leaf from a tree that had been pressed between pages.

"Momma, look what I found," the boy cried out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in his voice, the young boy shouted, "I think it's Adam's suit!"



What more appropriate for February than a recipe for Kissling Cookies? My neighbor shared this recipe, which she said makes cookies which melt in your mouth and are sweet like kisses. The recipe was one I make but have always called Russian Tea Cookies. Why they are called this, I do not know, because Russians, as a rule, do not have small cookies with their chai. Whatever you call them, make them often because there is no need to haul out a lot of equipment. A mixing bowl and spoon are all that are needed. Make these and share them with your valentine with a cup of tea (chai).

KISSLINGS OR RUSSIAN TEA COOKIES

1 cup butter
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/4 cup flour
3/4 cup nuts

Cream softened butter. Add vanilla, sifted flour and sugar. Blend well. Add nuts. Chill. Roll into 1 inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 325° for about 20-25 minutes. Watch carefully, bake until set, not brown. Roll in powdered sugar. Cool. Roll in powdered sugar again.

MARRIAGE

Marriage in the Orthodox Church is not reduced to an exchange of vows or the establishment of a legal contract between the bride and groom. On the contrary, it is God joining a man and woman into "one flesh" similar to the Church being joined to Christ as stated in Ephesians 5:31, 32. The Church believes that the success of marriage does not depend on mutual human promises – so the couple does not marry each other. It believes that the promises and blessing of God are needed. In the Orthodox marriage ceremony, the bride and groom offer their lives to Christ and to each other – literally as crowned martyrs.

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WINTER'S GRACE

You feel that during your life you have placed full trust in God, yet the injustices in society and the views of some on TV and radio have raised doubts in your mind. You don't mention it to anyone and you try to put it out of your mind.

Many are troubled by the description of faith in Hebrews 11:1 "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To them it defines faith as absolute intellectual certainty – something they do not always have. They doubt at times.

But in its context, this verse explains both what faith is and what it does. It affirms the certainty that comes as we try to continue in our trust in God. As we continue to try we become assured of the reality of God and the heaven that awaits us.

To test the validity of this statement, consider the steadfast faith of so many of our "grey heads" who have continued trusting God through great trials, sorrow and pain. They will tell you that God has become so real and precious to them that they are absolutely sure of Him and the truthfulness of His promises.

Don't let times of doubt discourage you. Keep trusting and obeying the Lord and His Word. Feed your faith and your doubts will starve.

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Home Bible Reading Schedule

FEBRUARY 2002

1	Mark 9:33-41	15	Mark 12:1-12
2	Luke 14:1-11	16	Luke 17:3-10
3	**Matt 25:14-30**	**17**	**Luke 19:1-10**
4	Mark 9:42-10:1	18	Mark 12:13-17
5	Mark 10:2-12	19	Mark 12:18-27
6	Mark 10:11-16	20	Mark 12:28-37
7	Mark 10:17-27	21	Mark 12:38-44
8	Mark 10:23-32	22	Mark 13:1-6
9	Luke 16:10-15	23	Luke 18:2-8
10	**John 15:17-16:2**	**24**	**Luke 18:10-14**
11	Mark 10:46-52	25	Mark 13:9-13
12	Mark 11:11-23	26	Mark 13:14-23
13	Mark 11:23-26	27	Mark 13:24-31
14	Mark 11:27-33	28	Mark 13:31-14:2

BIBLE STUDY

"Let us humble ourselves, brethren, and the Lord will show us all things as a loving father shows all things to his children." These are the words of the twentieth century ascetic Saint Silouan of Mount Athos. This is just what the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14) did in the Lord's parable which gives the Sunday of February 24 part of its name: The Publican and the Pharisee. With no affectation, he humbly cried out to God: "Have mercy on me."

We say this many times during the course of a liturgy. Did you notice that? And is that what we truly mean? If so, then we can be sure that the Lord has already heard us and has been showing us ever so many useful things for our life on earth and in eternity (Which begins right here!).

A Western spiritual thinker has written: "With God there are no accidents. Every incident is intended to bring us closer to Him." What have we noticed about our lives? Let us be alert, let us examine our lives prayerfully, humbly, expectantly, willing to receive God's directions. Let us cast off our fear that others will think badly of us if we show ourselves to be "weak," sinful, prone to make mistakes, to forget – and are in need of forgiveness from God and our fellow humans. That we need understanding and tolerance because we simply cannot be pleasing to everyone – just as everyone cannot be pleasing to us. What FREEDOM there is in humility!

This may be why the Lord tells us that we shall enter into His Kingdom as children, without pretenses or pretensions, simply with a profound need for warmth and love – things He is always willing to shower us with. And let us give these gifts to each other. Then we shall receive as well!

Fr. Kutash, Ph.D.

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What judge had 70 sons?
2. Who is the first child mentioned in the Bible?
3. Who was Noah's youngest son?
4. What king was the youngest of eight brothers?
5. Who was Joseph's younger son?
6. Who is the youngest son of Adam mentioned by name?
7. Who were the first twins mentioned in the Bible?

ANSWERS:
1. Gideon (Judges 8:30)
2. Cain (Genesis 4:1)
3. Ham (Genesis 9:18-24)
4. David (1 Samuel 17:12-14)
5. Ephraim (Genesis 41:51-52)
6. Seth (Genesis 4:25)
7. Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:23-16)